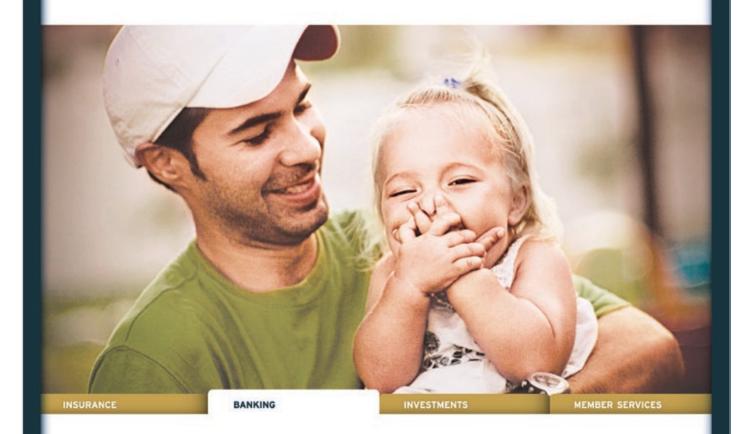
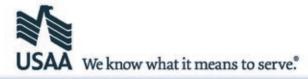


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On the Cover

Master Sgt. Doug Flavin, NCOIC of the Small Arms Readiness Training Section, stands ready with the rest of his firing line during training at Fort Devens, Mass., in April. (Photo: Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Maes)

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Command Message

RESPECT

By Command Sgt. Major David Costa, State Command Sergeant Major of Massachusetts



The summer is here and we've just commemorated Memorial Day.

The last Monday in May is the most important date for Soldiers, followed by November 11 and June 14. With our Armed Forces deployed in a multi-front conflict, more Soldiers since the end of WWII are wearing unit insignia on their right shoulders. While the term "combat patch" is used in casual conversations, officially

it is known as the shoulder sleeve insignia – former wartime service (SSI-FWTS.) The former wartime service insignia, along with unit citations, is among the most respected insignia we wear – respected because of the reasons and circumstances they are worn. If one word could best describe the former wartime service insignia it is "respect."

Soldiers choose to wear a SSI-FWTS to demonstrate their respect and their humbleness for those who have been killed in action, wounded or are still deployed with the unit they once served with. When individuals point out the FWTS insignia I wear, I feel undeserving. I will always remember the story my noncommissioned officers told me of my FWTS unit in the Korean War. The 3rd Battalion of the 8th Cavalry Regiment was conducting a rear guard action against the 115th and 116th Chinese Army Divisions. The 3rd Battalion was surrounded and out of ammunition and called for the 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, to breakthrough to the 3rd Battalion. During the battle, the 3rd Battalion suffered 400 casualties and was no longer an organized fighting force. The 2nd Battalion broke off the attack, suffering 250 casualties while withdrawing to avoid a massacre. Unable to move their wounded, the officers, noncommissioned officers and the chaplain of the 2nd Battalion decided to remain with the wounded and became casualties themselves.

That combat action is one of many my leaders instructed me in and that is why I wear the insignia of the 1st Cavalry Division on my right shoulder. I wear it out of respect! If you choose to wear a FWTS insignia, remember why you wear it − as a sign of respect. ★

102nd Wing Redesignated in Ceremony

By Senior Airman Matt Benedetti, 102nd Intelligence Wing Public Affairs

OTIS AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, **Mass.** – A special ceremony was held April 6 to mark the changeover of the 102nd Fighter Wing to the 102nd Intelligence Wing.

Maj. Gen. Joseph Carter, The Adjutant General of the Massachusetts National Guard, presided over the ceremony as the new flag for the unit was unveiled by the base honor guard.

The intelligence mission launches a new era for Otis as the wing transforms from flying operations to intelligence and command and control functions.

"Our future legacy will be built on the need for Otis to be an integral component to help the Air Force transform itself to be capable of meeting the new threats posed by terrorist or other groups that threaten the security and sanctity of our country," said Col. Anthony Schiavi, 102nd Intelligence Wing commander. "We are now an integral part of the first team that helps dominate air, space and cyberspace mediums."

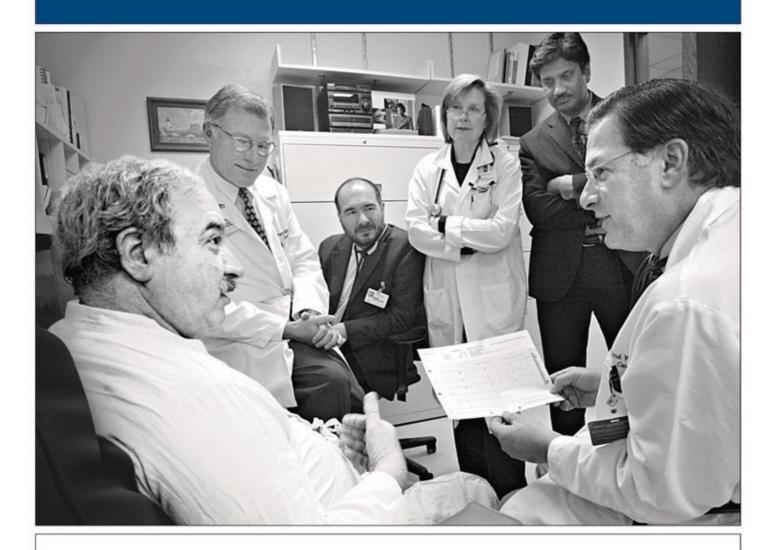
The new intelligence group, designated a digital ground station, will exploit and analyze information sent from unmanned aerial vehicles circling the globe. The unit will also provide direct, around-the-clock support to combat

operations worldwide. An air operations group supporting command and control of long-range strikes and cyber operations is scheduled to be activated in October. **



Maj. Gen Joseph Carter, The Adjutant General, presides over the unfurling of the 102nd Intelligence Wing flag during the redesignation ceremony. (Photo: Staff Sqt. Kerri Cole)

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Concluding a 35-Year

MISSION

By Senior Airman Matt Benedetti, 102nd Intelligence Wing Public Affairs

OTIS AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Mass. — Whether the mission included intercepting Soviet bombers flying to and from Cuba, escorting a hijacked Lufthansa flight to a safe landing in New York, or responding to the terrorist attacks on 9/11, the 102nd Fighter Wing has been the primary bulwark of the northeast United States for the last 35 years. By providing a vigilant presence during the Cold War and the Global War on Terrorism, members of the 102nd Fighter Wing have established a reputation as a unit that is unparalleled in training and performance.

The 102nd has been responsible for protecting over 500,000 square miles of airspace including the metropolitan areas of Boston, New York and Philadelphia. Otis ANGB has been on 24 hour, 365 day alert for more than 35 years.

Col. Anthony Schiavi, the 102nd commander, recognizes the importance of the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) mission and the enormous responsibility it entailed. He expressed those sentiments after his ceremonial flight to conclude the F-15 mission at Otis on Jan. 24, 2008.

"Today is a proud moment for all the men and women who have been part

of the 102nd mission of protecting America – a mission they have done proudly and professionally for 35 years," said Schiavi.

Casting an eye towards the future mission, he observed, "With all endings come new beginnings, and in just a few short months the 102nd Intelligence Wing will begin a different kind of 'watch' as we embark on a new 24/7 mission centered around intelligence gathering, analysis and exploitation directly supporting the war fighter and combatant commanders around the globe."

The 102nd Fighter Wing's commitment to excellence is reflected in the peerless safety record established over the last three decades. The wing has logged more than 80,000 accident-free flying hours.

By earning its highest and fourth straight outstanding rating, the 102nd garnered praise from Lt. Gen. Charles Bouchard, NORAD deputy commander, "You can't get better than that. Its' hard to beat perfection," said Bouchard.

As the 102nd moves forward and accepts the challenges of the new intelligence mission, optimism abounds.

"There is no doubt that we will excel in this new mission just as we have in our current one," said Schiavi. ★















FITP OF THE COINT Waltham Soldier Featured on Military Currency

By Richard Conn, Daily News Tribune

He had a one in three chance. It could have been as high as 25 cents. But it also could have been as low as a nickel.

Whatever the case, Sgt. Sean Durkee said he was honored to have his face plastered on a 10-cent piece, just like former President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

"If the 10-cent piece is good enough for F.D.R., it's good enough for me," the Waltham resident said.

Unlike Roosevelt, Durkee's picture isn't on legal tender. But a photo of him talking with a group of Iraqi children can be found on a pog – a flat, lightweight coated disk used by Soldiers for currency overseas in place of heavy metal coins. His image could be seen by millions of troops around the world whenever they make a purchase.

The Army Air Force Exchange Service created the military pogs in 2001 for Soldiers to use in lieu of coins. The disks, which serve the same purpose as gift certificates, were developed due to Department of Defense restrictions on shipping coins overseas. With limited capacity on shipping flights, essential items such as food and ammunition take precedent.

The pog name comes from a game that originated on the island of Maui in the 1920s played with disk-like objects with pictures on their face side. Pog is an acronym for a Hawaiian drink made from passion fruit, orange and guava juices.

Found in 5-, 10- and 25-cent denominations, each pog features a picture of a U.S. Soldier. Durkee served in Iraq from 2005 to 2006 as a sergeant in the Massachusetts Army National Guard. The photograph featuring Durkee was taken in early 2006 in a town in northern Iraq, where he said local children seemingly always wanted to interact with Soldiers.

"It's not unusual for them to crowd around Soldiers or a vehicle," Durkee said.

The children shown gathered around him in the picture were asking him to count to 10 in Arabic, while he said the children would count in English to 20. Durkee admits the kids did a better job of counting in English than he did in Arabic.

"The kids, you could always make them laugh," Durkee said.

The photo has also appeared in the Army Air Force Exchange Services 2008 calendar for the month of April. Durkee said he tried to scoop up a large number of the calendars, but at \$4.95 a pop, he had to limit his purchases. Durkee is the son of William Durkee, a former city councilor and the current manager of the city's Community Preservation Act fund.

The elder Durkee said monitoring the day-to-day events in Iraq in the news while his son was over there was sometimes "nerve-wracking." He said, though, that while his son may have faced potentially dangerous

scenarios during his deployment, Sean was quick to note that there were other Soldiers on the front lines facing greater hazards.

"He always defers to those who were more in harm's way much more than he was," William Durkee said.

Sean now works in Bedford as a financial analyst at Lincoln Laboratories. Durkee said he recently noticed a pog featuring Elvis Presley in his Army uniform fetched \$10 on eBay.

Does he believe there is a chance that a pog with his likeness could garner a similar amount?

"Yes, but I will probably be the one bidding on it," Durkee joked.

The pogs, Durkee said, are hard to come by. He's looking to acquire more of his pogs to keep or give to friends and family.

He's willing to pay and wants anyone who might have come across the Sean Durkee-pog to listen to his big-money offer.

"I'd almost be willing to double their money on it," he said. "I'll give them 20 cents for a 10-cent pog."



Iraqi Air Force Passes Combat Test in Basra

By Tech. Sgt. Amanda Callahan, 447th Air Expeditionary Group Public Affairs

SATHER AIR BASE, Iraq – The expanding capabilities of Iraq's air force were tested in combat during an Iraqi-led offensive in Basra from March 27 to April 3.

In support of Operation Knight's Charge, Iraqi airmen from Baghdad's New Al Muthana Air Base successfully performed their first tactical airlift operation.

"I'm proud about our people, and satisfied with all missions," said Brig. Gen. Kareem, the base commander.

After receiving personal phone calls from the Iraqi minister of defense and the commanding general of the Iraqi Air Force,

General Kareem commented, "We've gained the confidence that we can do the job by ourselves and the confidence that we can support our army."

Iraqi airmen supported their army by pushing two of their C-130s to maximum capacity. They successfully delivered 265 tons of cargo and 2,400 military passengers while evacuating 97 casualties from Basra to Baghdad.

On the operation's busiest day, the Iraqis hauled 103,000 pounds of cargo, performed 37 medical evacuations and transported 44 passengers and five Iraqi soldiers who were killed in action. According to Master Sgt. B.A. Lund, a load-master adviser from the Coalition Air Forces Training Team and a Kingston, Wash., native, the statistics aren't just impressive for Iraq's air force. They would be impressive for any air force.

The Iraqi air force's successes in their first combat airlift operation did not come without challenges.

The initial challenge happened before the first aircraft left the ground. Equipment, ammunition and food needed to be packed and moved quickly from the air base to the Iraqi troops in Basra. This required the Iraqi airmen at the air terminal operations center to "surge" to eight times their regular day-to-day tempo in order to properly prepare the cargo for airlift. Operations center Airmen worked 24-hour days



Southwick, Mass., native Dr. (Lt. Col.) Sean Collins receives a token of thanks from a member of the Iraqi Air Force. (Photo: Courtesy of the U.S. Air Force)

to ensure the supplies reached the troops who needed them.

"They went from sleepy hollow to prime time," said Capt. George Henney, a base support unit adviser with the transition team and a Huntington, Pa., native.

The Iraqi airmen displayed initiative by beginning cargo-moving preparations without assistance from the team's advisers, but U.S. Airmen were anxious to get into the action.

"The 447th Aerial Port jumped at the chance to work with the Iraqis," said Senior Master Sgt. William Mahaffey, from the 447th Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron and an Apollo, Pa., native. "Preparing cargo for airlift is what we do, so to have a major impact on the war in this manner was a shot of adrenaline."

Once the C-130s began shuttling cargo and passengers between New Al Muthana and Basra, another challenge emerged. To keep the hardworking aircraft up to par, the Iraqi aircraft maintainers worked above standards, said Capt. Norris Thompson, a maintenance adviser and a Jackson, Miss., native.

"If you would have told me, a maintenance officer, 'you have to sustain a flying (operation) program for six to seven weeks with one airplane,' I would have said 'no way.' But, they did it." he said.

The Iragi airmen also overcame a medical training obstacle. The Iragi medical staff was not fully trained to deal with the physiological stresses that occur to inflight patients, said Dr. (Lt. Col.) Sean Collins, a medical adviser. Collins, a Southwick, Mass., native, said that once he conveved the inflight medical concerns to the Iraqi airmen, they took the reigns and successfully cared for the patients.

"I'm extremely proud of the work they did because they had never been exposed to this type of environment," Collins said. "It was incredible."

As the operation unfolded, mounting casualties seemed to drive the Iraqi crews to work that much harder, to push that much further, according to American advisers.

The Iraqi soldiers who paid the ultimate price were not forgotten during the hectic surge operation. They were honored by both Iraqi and coalition forces with an impromptu patriot detail.

"Sometimes they led, sometimes we led, but it was always both of us, Americans and Iraqis, lined up to pay our respects," Capt. Jens Lyndrup, a navigator adviser and a Charleston, S.C., native.

Despite the many challenges presented to the Iraqi airmen, they were able to successfully provide tactical airlift in a combat environment with very little involvement of U.S. Airmen or aircraft.

"We are on the right track for a great air force in the future," said General Kareem.

The goal of the Coalition Air Forces Transition Team is to build a credible air force in Iraq with a solid foundation for future growth. From the standpoint of many transition team members, the airlift support during Operation Knight's Charge has earned the Iraqi air force a significant amount of credibility.

"This was an Iraqi mission," said Collins.
"Everybody performed spectacularly." ★

CLOSE QUARTER MARKSMANSHIP TRAINING

By Maj. Brett Conaway, Massachusetts Small Arms Readiness Training Section

MILFORD, Mass. - Marksmanship training in the Massachusetts National Guard took a giant step forward at the beginning of April when the state's top weapons trainers became a certified cadre of Close Quarter Marksmanship Instructors.

All assigned members of the small arms readiness training section, personnel from the premobilization training assistance element, and selected noncommissioned officers from throughout the state who have distinguished themselves in marksmanship training attended the event.

The trainers completed a rigorous, one-week, day and night course of fire and are now prepared to turn what they have learned into top quality marksmanship training for units thoughout the commonwealth.

E.A.G. Tactical, a widely respected military contractor, conducted the certification course at Fort Devens. Among other accomplishments, E.A.G recently assisted the New Mexico National Guard in development of a new CQM-focused weapons qualification program.

The proponent of this train-the-trainer certification event was the newly formed pre-mobilization training assistance element which is charged with validating the readiness of Massachusetts units for deployment. Master Sgt. Doug Flavin, who is on tour with the PTAE, has been the noncommissioned officer in charge of the Massachusetts National Guard Small Arms Readiness Training Section for the past four years. In that time, Flavin, who is also the top sniper on the Massachusetts State Police, fully recognized the need to incorporate CQM into marksmanship training for all Soldiers in order to fully prepare them for combat assignments.

Flavin skillfully coordinated with the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, Lt. Col. Frank Magurn, and Lt. Col. Richard Johnson, PTAE commander, to acquire the resources needed to conduct this critical training event. Effective immediately, units can access these CQM trainers through Flavin in the PTAE office at JFHQ by phone at (508) 233-7608 or e-mail at douglas.flavin@us.army.mil.

Another venue for advanced marksmanship training open to all members of the MANG is the series of combat formatted marksmanship competitions being coordinated by the MA-SARTS in

August, September and October 2008. TAGMA Circular 351-08-02 was published on April 5, 2008, and provides comprehensive information on this year's state marksmanship competition being held Aug. 23-24, 2008, at Fort Devens. This will be the qualifying match



Sgt. Scott Collins, Troop C, 1st Squadron, 182nd Cavalry Regiment, listens intently to the instructors during advanced marksmanship training at Fort Devens, Mass. (Photo: Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Maes)

for Massachusetts Soldiers and Airmen invited to represent the MANG at the 2008 New England Warrior Challenge Regional Match at Fort Devens, Sept. 14-17, 2008, and the 2008 Winston P. Wilson National Match held at Camp Robinson, Arkansas, Oct. 12-17, 2008.

Commanders and Soldiers at every level are encouraged to utilize the newly certified CQM trainers and advanced marksmanship training opportunities





By Sgt. 1st Class Michael Hickey, 972nd Military Police Company

BAGHDAD – The 972nd Military Police Company received the distinct honor of hosting a re-enlistment ceremony for 15 Soldiers in the company. The re-enlistment oath was administered by Gen. David Petraeus, Commanding General of Multi-National Forces-Iraq. The 720th Military Police Battalion also had seven other Soldiers attend, including two from the 972nd's fellow Massachusetts National Guard unit, Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 181st Infantry Regiment.

The ceremony was held poolside at Freedom Rest, a rest and relaxation facility co-located with the 972nd's home away from home, Forward Operating Base Freedom. The ceremony was well attended and all levels of the chain of command had representatives on hand to show their support for the re-enlisting Soldiers. Honored guests included the 18th Military Police Brigade Command Sergeant Major, Command Sgt. Major Bernard McPherson, and Lt. Col. Frank Y. Rangel

General Petraeus speaks about the sacrifices of Soldiers serving in today's military. (Photo: Courtesy of the 972nd Military Police Company)

Jr. and Command Sgt. Major J. Drew Craig, commander and command sergeant major of the 720th Military Police Battalion, respectively.

The ceremony was the culmination of weeks of hard work and coordination by 1st Sgt. Steven Buccheri as the result of a chance interaction he had with a member of Petraeus' staff. Buccheri figured "it couldn't hurt to ask" and was a bit surprised when things started coming together. "With so many units in theater, we were pleasantly surprised that General Petraeus agreed to join us for our ceremony," said Buccheri.

Petraeus spoke of the dedication and commitment of the re-enlistees and the entire company, as well as his appreciation of the personal sacrifices of the Soldiers and their families as a result of their service to their country. He then shook hands with each re-enlisting Soldier and presented each of them with his coin. Every Soldier present was then given the opportunity to take a photo with the general as he shook their hands.

After the ceremony, each Soldier was presented with their Oath of Re-enlistment Certificate, personally signed by Petraeus.

"I think it was great," said Staff Sgt. John Quinn, the unit retention NCO, "these Soldiers will remember this for the rest of their lives." ★



Gen. Petraeus presents Staff Sqt. Guillermo Bonilla with a coin after administering the re-enlistment oath.

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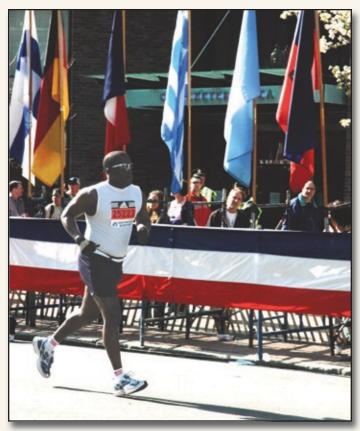
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All the Way to Boston, Never Quit!



Warrant Officer Derek L. Goodman, a property book officer from the Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, Joint Force Headquarters Massachusetts National Guard, approaches the finish line during the 112th Boston Marathon. (Photo: Sgt. James Lally)

By Sgt. James Lally, Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

MILFORD, Mass. – The air was cool and crisp, and the skies were blue. The atmosphere in Hopkinton was festive as Guardsmen, spectators and an estimated 25,000 contenders prepared to run the 112th Boston Marathon.

"The start point was insane, it took 20 minutes just to cross the starting line," said Sgt. 1st Class James S. Keay, the readiness non-commissioned officer for the 772nd Military Police Company, Massachusetts Army National Guard.

Keay, a 17-year-member of the MANG, and an Operation Enduring Freedom veteran, has run in two previous marathons. Keay said he decided to run this year to represent himself and his unit.

"I feel privileged to represent the Mass. Guard at the marathon," said Keay.

The Mass. Guard has supported the marathon for many years. This year the Mass. Guard Soldiers and Airmen provided support to law enforcement agencies along the marathon route from Hopkinton to Boston in order to safeguard spectators and maintain public order on "Patriots Day."

The presence of the Guardsmen along the route was easily noticed by spectators and runners alike. Keay noticed the Guardsmen as he ran by and credits them with motivating him.

"Thank you for all the motivation, encouragement and support," said Keay, "Without it, I would not be able to do it."

To train for the race, Keay said he participates in an intermediate marathon program.

Going the distance takes commitment and training. When training for the marathon another Guardsman who ran the marathon keeps it simple.

"I just eat right, properly hydrate and do medium runs on the weekend," said Warrant Officer Derek L. Goodman, a property book officer with the Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, Joint Force Headquarters, MANG.

Goodman, a member of the MANG for 17 years, has run in five previous Boston Marathons. Goodman said he decided to run this year because he is hooked.

"I felt confident that I would be able to complete another marathon. There is a natural high that comes from knowing I can make that kind of distance," said Goodman.

Staying motivated is easy for Goodman. But Goodman said he wants to motivate others.

"If there is ever an opportunity to be able to accomplish something of this magnitude, by all means do it," said Goodman, "Go for it! You will be rewarded with self gratification and inner strength. There is always a feeling of accomplishment when finishing the Boston Marathon."

Goodman was greeted by enthusiastic cheers from spectators as he approached the finish line and raised his arms triumphantly. \bigstar

THE GUARD EXPERIENCE

By Chief Warrant Officer 4 James Girard, Recruiting and Retention Command

MILFORD, Mass. – The Guard Experience is an exciting new recruiting program geared toward teaching young men and women about the Massachusetts Army National Guard in a classroom setting.

The program, administered by Docupak Inc., provides incentives to potential Soldiers who come spend an evening listening to recruiters and recruiting assistants talk about the Massachusetts Army National Guard. The evening begins with a presentation about the history, experience and benefits of the National Guard. It ends with pizza for the potential Soldier and an assortment of gifts in exchange for their time. Some of the gifts include an ACU backpack filled with ARNG

merchandise, a Subway gift card, a BP gas card and a Best Buy gift card. At the end of the evening, all potential Soldiers will be afforded the opportunity to take the ASVAB at a local MET site. If the individual takes the ASVAB within two weeks of the experience, they receive an additional incentive.

The pilot program was launched July 17, 2007, in Boston and there have been nine events since then. Many Guard Experience events are planned for 2008; if you would like more information or would like to attend, call your local Army National Guard Recruiter. ★



Armed Forces Reserve Center Groundbreaking

By Maj. Jack McKenna, Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

WESTOVER AIR RESERVE BASE, Mass. – A symbolic groundbreaking ceremony was held in March at Westover Air Reserve Base in Chicopee, and Maj. Gen Joseph C. Carter, The Adjutant

General of the Massachusetts National Guard, participated as part of this historical event, marking the first ever multi-service military reserve center in Massachusetts.

The Armed Forces Reserve Center to be built at Westover is a joint facility constructed as a result of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) commission that announced proposed changes to the structures of the Army Reserve Centers throughout New England.

Approximately 1,600 military members from the Army Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve and Massachusetts Army National Guard will be housed in the new facility when construction is completed in the summer or early fall of 2009.

"The construction of the Westover Armed Forces Reserve Center is indicative of the way we do business in today's environment — One Team, One Fight," Carter said. "A joint operation allows us to bring together multiple resources, thus creating significant efficiencies and cost savings. More importantly, the Westover Armed Forces Reserve Center enhances our ability to respond to global threats and improves our service to the citizens of Massachusetts by improving our ability to assist communities in the western part of Massachusetts in times of need." *



Artist's rendering of the Armed Forces Reserve Center now under construction in Chicopee, Mass., scheduled for completion in summer or fall 2009. (Rendering: Courtesy of Westover Air Force Reserve Base)

Commemorating the Militia's First Mus

1st Sgt. David M. Howes from Battery B, 1st Battalion, 101st Field Artillery Regiment, leads the way as Battery B marches to Salem Common to participate in the 371st Anniversary of the First Muster.

America's
National Guard
heritage can be
traced back to the
First Muster in
Salem more than
371 years ago.

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Patrick Jennings, Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs Photos by Sgt. James Lally

MILFORD, Mass. – The Massachusetts National Guard and the city of Salem celebrated the 371st Anniversary of the First Muster on Salem Common, Saturday, April 17.

The celebration consisted of a three-part event commemorating five significant events in the history of the Massachusetts National Guard to include the origin of the Army National Guard.

On Dec. 13, 1636, the General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony ordered the organization of the Colony's militia companies into three regiments, specifically the North, South and East Regiments. The colonists had adopted the English militia system, which obligated males between the ages of 16 and 60, to possess arms and participate in the defense of the community.

The early colonial militia drilled weekly and provided Guard details each evening to sound an alarm in case of attack. Strained relations between

the Pequot Tribal Nation and the people of the Massachusetts Bay Colony required the militia to maintain a state of readiness. Although the exact date is not known, the very first muster of the East Regiment took place in Salem, Mass., in the spring of 1637.

America's National Guard heritage can be traced back to the First Muster in Salem more than 371 years ago. Currently, Guardsmen from



Capt. Mark S. Fitzgerald, commander of Battery B, 1st Battalion, 101st Field Artillery Regiment, organizes the formation of Soldiers and civilian organizations in preparation for a reading by Paul Bresnahan, the priest at Saint Peter's Church, for the remembrance of Capt. Stephen Abbott, founder and first commander of the 2nd Corps of Cadets.



The Honorable Kimberley Driscoll, mayor of Salem, accompanies Maj. Gen. Joseph C. Carter, The Adjutant General of the Massachusetts National Guard, as he inspects the troops during the 371st Anniversary of the First Muster.



The 126th Brigade Support Battalion's Forward Logistics Element assembled on Salem Common to participate in the Salem Muster. The 126th FLE is slated to deploy to Iraq, continuing the long and proud tradition of the Massachusetts National Guard's service to the nation.

ter and Origin of the National Guard

Massachusetts continue a tradition of service in Afghanistan and Iraq. The North, South and East Regiments continue to serve the Massachusetts Army National Guard as the 101st Field Artillery Regiment, the 101st Engineer Battalion, the 181st Infantry Regiment and the 182nd Cavalry Regiment.

The first part of the celebration took place at Saint Peter's Church in Salem. Soldiers from the 101st Field Artillery Regiment and military re-enactors from Glover's Regiment laid a wreath and fired a rifle salute at the grave site of Capt. Stephen Abbott, founder and first commander of the 2nd Corps of Cadets.

Later, Soldiers from the 101st Field Artillery Regiment, the 101st Engineer Battalion, the 181st Infantry Regiment and the 182nd Cavalry Regiment, along with period military re-enactors, assembled at Armory Park to commemorate the American Revolution. They fired a rifle salute and played "Taps" in remembrance of those Soldiers from the Essex Regiment who were killed and injured during the battle at Lexington and Concord.

Finally, Soldiers, Airmen, family members and dignitaries gathered for the main event on Salem Common to celebrate the 1636 founding of the North, South and East Regiments and the First Muster in 1637. A howitzer salute was fired with martial music. Along with this remembrance, officials in attendance recognized the Soldiers of the 126th Brigade Support Battalion's Forward Logistics Element, who will deploy to Iraq, continuing the long and proud tradition of the Massachusetts National Guard. **



The 215th Army Band, Massachusetts Army National Guard, plays during a ceremony at Armory Park, Salem Mass., to commemorate the American Revolution and Soldiers from the Essex Regiment who were killed during the battle at Lexington and Concord.



Conversation with Mrs. Maureen Serrecchia

State Family Program Director, Massachusetts National Guard

By Maj. Jack McKenna, Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

Mrs. Maureen Serrecchia has been an integral part of the Massachusetts National Guard for many years. Recently, I had an opportunity to sit down and discuss with her how the family support group has grown over the years.

What is the State Family Program and how long have you supported this program?

The State Family Program Office works to develop and strengthen a partnership between the Guard and Guard families in order to ensure the best possible avenues of communication, involvement and support. Family readiness equates to mission readiness. I have been fortunate to assist Guard families for the past 12 years of my 17-year career. I have seen the program grow from an informational office to a viable quality of life asset for not only Guard families, but all Massachusetts military families.

How many employees are involved with the Family Program?

Our staff consists of 15 dedicated, reliable team members. Supporting the program director and assistant are two air wing coordinators, two family readiness assistants, a youth coordinator, a communication specialist, a family assistant coordinator and six family assistance center specialists.

Family Readiness is a command program; what can commanders do to help?

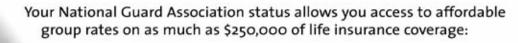
Commanders have an obligation to implement a viable family program network within their units. Annual family informational briefings should be provided for unit and family members identifying benefits and entitlements. The family readiness mission should be addressed by the establishment of unit family readiness group, chartered with appropriate volunteer leadership and command participation. The unit FRG should be supported by command with supplies, equipment and information. The group volunteers need to be adequately trained and appropriately recognized for their multiple hours of volunteer service. The most successful FRGs are those where the command is actively involved and supportive of all programmed activities.

Can you tell us a little about how Family Readiness Groups started and where they are today?

Family readiness groups were initially known as family support groups. Support groups began as a grass roots concept among military families who banded together throughout overseas and isolated location tours and during periods of multiple conflicts. These groups provided information

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and moral support to their members through social gatherings. As a result of lessons learned during the Gulf War from 1990-1991, the military focused sharply on "family readiness" rather than "family support." On June 1, 2000, the Department of Army officially renamed family support groups as family readiness groups in order to emphasize the need for readiness and self-sufficiency among military families.

Today, family readiness groups are essential as a mission readiness tool in all commands and are vital to the readiness and morale of Guard members and their families. Family readiness groups are initiated and chartered by the unit commander and then officially sanctioned by the adjutant general. Even though our state family readiness groups are chartered by specific National Guard units, we welcome all military families in need of support to join us. Our family groups do everything from holding meetings and planning activities to collaborating in support of our troops. Family readiness groups are a vital link in the family program mission.

How many FRGs are there in the state?

Currently, we have roughly 40 chartered family readiness groups in the state. We are working toward the goal of chartering 100 percent of our Air and Army National Guard Units.

How can someone participate in, or volunteer for an FRG?

Interested individuals may simply join through their Guardmember or contact the unit command to inquire on the status of the unit FRG and dates of upcoming meetings. Those that would like to participate as a lead volunteer should contact their unit command, as well as, the state family readiness assistant. Those volunteers will be enrolled in our mandatory volunteer leadership training program.

What is a Family Assistance Center and how many are in the state?

A family assistance center is a hub for providing support services and referrals for Guard and family members during periods of deployment and emergency mobilizations. There are six family assistance centers throughout the state located in Wellesley, Milford, Reading, Worcester, Taunton and Springfield. There are also two wing family centers to support all Guard families located at Otis and Barnes Air National Guard Bases.

Can you describe the Youth Program?

The primary goal of the youth program is to engage our youth, their families and the community in a partnership that supports all aspects of civilian and military youth environments. The

program is designed to assist our youth in reaching their full potential so they have a unique understanding of military values, a positive impact on their community, and a clear direction of how to attain a rewarding and successful future. The youth program promotes ownership at the unit level as it integrates with the family readiness group mission. Our program allows our youth to have fun, while at the same time providing an opportunity to build peer networks. Unit youth volunteers eagerly support activities that provide direction for the future of our Guard youth.

April was the Month of the Military Child. What can Guardsmen do to show appreciation for their children all year?

Military children are recognized throughout the month of April for the sacrifices they make by being part of a military family. Military children give unselfishly. They are resilient while surviving multiple periods of separation due to military training and mobilization. They successfully meet the challenges of deployment and sustain the absence of their loved ones for birthdays, family events and holidays. Our military children are unique. They share their Guard members with the world in order to defend our way of life. They are true patriots. The simplest way to show your appreciation is to say "thank you."

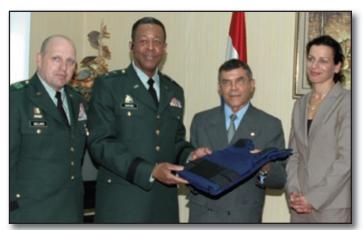
During the month of April, The Massachusetts National Guard Youth Program recognized Guard Youth with a special "thank you" certificate. To request one for your child contact the MANG Youth Program Coordinator by e-mail MASSNGYouth@aol.com or call (888) 301-3103, extension 7290. Be sure to include the name, rank and unit of the Soldier or Airman, as well as the child's full name and a mailing address.

Operation Purple is a great success. Can you tell the readers what it is and if there are any thoughts to expanding it?

The National Military Family Association's Operation Purple is a free camp for military children ages 8-15. Preference is given to children of those currently deployed: however. children of all military family members are eligible to apply. The goal of these free summer camps is to bring together youth who are experiencing not only military life but all stages of deployment and the stress that goes along with it. Operation Purple camps provide kids coping skills and peer support networks, which enable them to better handle life's ups and downs. Camp Marshall in Spencer has expanded from offering a one week to a two week date choice this year. You can find more information, dates and out of state camp locations by visiting the NMFA Web site: www.nmfa.org. *



TAG Travels to Paraguay



Brig. Gen. Thomas J. Sellars, (left), Commander, Land Component Command, Massachusetts; Maj. Gen. Joseph C. Carter, The Adjutant General, Massachusetts National Guard; Juliette Kayyem, Undersecretary for Homeland Security Massachusetts; and James C. Cason, U.S. Ambassador to Paraguay, present Minister Hugo Ibarra with a bulletproof vest donated by the North Eastern Massachusetts Law Enforcement Council.

Story and photos by Maj. Lisa Ahaesy, Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

MILFORD, Mass. – Maj. Gen. Joseph C. Carter's desire to strengthen the State Partnership Program between the Massachusetts National Guard and Paraguay led him to South America in April, along with Undersecretary for Homeland Security, Juliette Kayyem; Deputy Undersecretary, Paul Connelly; Army Land Component Commander, Brig. Gen. Thomas Sellars; State Command Sergeant Major David Costa; Air Operations Liaison, Lt. Col. Mark Zechman; and State Partnership Program Manager, Capt. Isias Liriano, to see firsthand the work being done and explore ways to enhance the partnership and its activities.

"We had the opportunity to meet with Ambassador James C. Cason and the members of the Embassy Country Team to discuss their activities and focus on areas in which we can cooperate in future engagements. We met with the Minister of Defense, the Minister of National Secretariat of Anti Drug (SENAD), and the commanding generals of the Paraguayan military forces," said Capt. Isaias Liriano, State Partnership Program Manager.

Kayyem, Connelly and Sellars met with the Minister of Secretariat of National Emergency and other governmental offices, coordinated by the embassy.

"The SEN is engaged in a number of efforts across the country, ranging from droughts and fires in the northwestern Chaco region, flooding in the southeastern Misiones region, all while providing emergency rations to indigenous people as part of state effort," Sellars said. "SEN is also working with the United Nations to stand up two regional offices, one in the north and the other in the south, to assist the main office located in the capital to manage the national response effort. Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency will return in June to conduct a conference of principles of emergency management to the new staff of the two offices."

Costa met with Command Sgt. Maj. Felipe Pereira, Paraguayan military forces command sergeant major, and they discussed the previous NCO Professional Development Conferences conducted in Paraguay and what could be done to continue to support the professional development of the Paraguayan NCO.

"Command Sgt. Maj. Pereira stated the Paraguayan NCO Academy has officers as their primary instructors," Costa said. "His long term goal is to have Paraguayan NCOs be instructors at their academy and would like the MANG Regional Training Institute to assist educating a core group of NCOs to be new instructors for the Paraguayan Academy. During our meeting I felt that we established a personal relationship and found out that we had many similarities."

The delegation visited the Joint Peace Keeping Education Center and met with its commander, Col. Ruben Peña, and observed members of the multi-role engineer unit conducting training to prepare for their deployment.

"Paraguay has been able to deploy individual members as observers to peace keeping operations and in December 2006 they deployed a platoon attached to a Brazilian company," Pena said. "With the support of Department of State, SOUTHCOM, ODC, and the MANG they will be able to deploy their first company under their own national flag an achievement which could not be done without the support of the U.S. Government."

During this trip the SPP completed its first civilian donation. The Northeastern Massachusetts Law Enforcement Council (NEMLEC) headed by President Richard Stanley, agreed to donate bulletproof vests to Paraguay as part of the State Partnership Program. During an official



Maj. Gen. Joseph C. Carter and the delegation are received by the Paraguayan honor guard at each visit during their stay in Paraguay.

ceremony at the SENAD office with Minister Hugo Ibarra, Ambassador Cason, Gen. Carter and the delegation, 49 concealable vests were donated to the SENAD and on the behalf of NEMLEC and the SPP.

"Prior to this donation, members of the SENAD, which conducts many real-time missions ceasing the movement of drugs and traffickers across the country, had no body armor to protect them," Cason said.

In a separate, yet equally important, official ceremony headed by Michael Fitzpatrick, deputy chief of mission, 32 non-concealable vests were donated to the Paraguayan SWAT police unit, which protects the lives of American and Paraguayan personnel and property of the U.S. Embassy.

During the visit at the Paraguayan air force headquarters, the Massachusetts delegation met with the chief of staff, Brig. Gen. Roberto Marecos. Marecos and Lt. Col. Mark Zechman, Massachusetts Air National Guard's director of operations, hit it off instantly through their common bond as Air Force pilots. After the meeting, Gen. Marecos provided a tour of the air force base.

"General Marecos was very excited to have the MANG visit Paraguay again and expressed his goal to build stronger ties with the Massachusetts Air National Guard in order to share experiences and expertise between the two air commands," Zechman said.

Since the visit with the Paraguayan air force, Maj. Michelle Artolachipe, ODC air force section chief, has been working with Zechman and the Paraguayan air force to coordinate a visit of the Massachusetts Air National Guard to exchange maintenance practices and risk management techniques in both their flying operations and maintenance groups. The Paraguayan military would also like to develop an international airport disaster preparedness plan in the event of a major aviation incident.

"Our experienced Airmen at Otis and Barnes will be invited to participate as the experts in this area," Zechman said.

The program continues to grow thanks to the work of folks like Liriano, support and active involvement from MANG and state leadership, as well as support from the community. The recent trip strengthened the partnership between Massachusetts and Paraguay and revealed ways to jointly build our capabilities.

Future opportunities exist for interested Soldiers and Airmen to serve in Paraguay. For more information about a position contact Capt. Isaias Liriano at (508) 233-6829. ★

Partnership with Paraguay

By Maj. Lisa Ahaesy, Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

MILFORD, **Mass.** – They jokingly called him the mayor of Paraguay during a visit there this past April.

"It's my home away from home, and these people are my family," Capt. Isaias Liriano said.

His home is Massachusetts, but his second home is Asuncion, Paraguay, where he spent nearly four years as the traditional commander's activities coordinator at the U.S. Embassy. Although he hasn't been back to South America for several months, the warm greeting and welcome home embraces he received showed he never left – in spirit anyway.

Four years ago, Liriano was the 26th Infantry Brigade's Headquarters Company commander. His life changed during the February 2004 unit training assembly when Brig. Gen. Stephen Wickstrom asked him if he spoke Spanish.

"I told him I was rusty, but could hold my own in a conversation," Liriano said.

Turns out there was an opportunity for a four-month temporary duty in South America for a captain or major able to read and speak Spanish.

"I told him I'd look into it," he said.

Liriano spoke to his wife, Jennifer, about the opportunity in South America and the experience of working oversees at the U.S. Embassy. They decided to call the phone number listed in the e-mail to gather more information. The phone number belonged to the U.S. Office of Defense Cooperation (ODC), located in the U.S. Embassy in Asuncion, Paraguay.

Once in Asuncion, Liriano worked in the U.S. Embassy and was part of the country team, composed of Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development, Peace Corps, Drug Enforcement Agency, Department of Defense and other U.S. agencies. Collectively, they utilized the mission strategic plan to determine an approach to engaging with the country of Paraguay.

"My duty was with the U.S. Office of Defense Cooperation, where we use the country security cooperation plan to selectively build capabilities within the Paraguayan Military and certain Paraguayan government offices," he explained.

"Through our unique role as Citizen Soldiers, our Soldiers and Airmen bring various skills to the program, not only from soldiering but also civilian experience and democracy," Liriano said. "We reached several milestones through our partnership with Paraguay."

So, what happened to Liriano and his four-month TDY? Well, he enjoyed his initial four-month tour, so he spent nearly four years in Paraguay.

"With the support of leadership at the JFHQ and the support of my family, we relocated to Paraguay in January 2005, where we spent the next three years," Liriano said.

"My family and I became part of the community. Jennifer was involved in the mission group in Paraguay through the embassy. She organized several fundraisers for projects like Operation Smile for people with cleft lip and palate. Our daughter, Alana, was a member of a Brownie Troop in Paraguay, and our son, Dylan, played soccer. On the weekends, both children enjoyed horseback riding," Liriano said, "We made friends who became family. We were members of a community."

In 2006, a delegation from Paraguay, which included members from the Paraguayan Secretariat of National Emergency (SEN), traveled to Massachusetts. They visited the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency, and a relationship was established. MEMA has provided technical support to SEN by recommending, reviewing and implementing the principles of emergency management.

In 2007, the Paraguayan Army established and staffed a multi-role engineer unit to deploy and participate in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations Mission. Engineers and military police of the 51st Troop Command have been providing ongoing support to the unit to assist in its preparations for deployment. ★



Story and photos by Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Maes, Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

CAMP EDWARDS, Mass. – The squad leaders checked their Soldiers one last time as they awaited the arrival of the helicopters. Within minutes, four UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters descended on Landing Zone Powderhorn to pick up the ready troops and transport them to a mock Iraqi village.

The Black Hawks flew at tree-top level for nearly 30 minutes before swooping onto the landing zone. The troops quickly disembarked the aircraft and set up a hasty perimeter. The aircraft lifted off and the Soldiers made their way into the woods to approach the village under cover. Intelligence reports indicated that members of "Allah's Revolutionary Jihadists" had entered the village and taken the mayor and others hostage.

A sniper team observed the terrorists "execute" a civilian in front of the mayor's residence and the pace of the mission increased quickly. Soldiers raced from the cover of the surrounding woods to set up a support-by-fire position while others ran to one of the buildings and stacked along the wall. One squad burst through a rear door and began clearing the building in search of hostages. Terrorists were shot as they popped their heads around corners or charged down staircases. The Soldiers rescued the mayor, recovered their wounded, gathered together and disappeared into the brush, ending the mission.

These Soldiers, from the 1st Battalion, 181st Infantry Regiment, had just completed one part of a large-scale training exercise at Camp Edwards in February. Parts of the 1200 and 5500 blocks on post were transformed into fictional Iraqi villages. The use of blank rounds, pyrotechnics and role players in costume added to the realism and increased the effectiveness of the training.

"This training is real-world – the way it happens in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom," said Lt. Col George Harrington, battalion commander. Air transportation was provided by the 126th Aviation.



Squad members race across an open area during their assault.

F-22 in Our Future?

By Capt. Matthew Mutti, 104th Fighter Wing

BARNES AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Mass. — Vision is an important part of an agency's growth; this is specifically true when it pertains to an evolving and dynamic institution like the military. The Air Force Chief of Staff, Gen. Michael Moseley, highlighted Barnes Air National Guard Base as a possible future home for either the F-22 Raptor or the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter in one of his newly released future planning visions.

The Air Force has recognized that its fleet of aging aircraft will need to be recapitalized within the next 20 years in order for us to continue to be the world's dominant Air Force. Barnes is a good example of a unit who needs to look forward, even after just completing an aircraft conversion, we need to continue to look forward ... our new 30-year-old aircraft will not last forever, more so, they will not be able to compete with fifth generation aircraft in the future.

As our government, specifically Congress, begins to look at our future year acquisitions, organizations like Lockheed Martin and Pratt and Whitney are engaged in an education campaign to highlight the capabilities of their fighters so that the legislators will be aware of the capabilities of the weapon systems they may procure.

April 14 and 15, Mark Dougherty, director of F-22 marketing, along with his team, brought the F-22 simulator demonstrator to the Barnes Air National Guard Base to show the unit, local legislators and local aerospace firms the capabilities of this aircraft.

During the visit, Massachusetts Secretary of Public Safety, Kevin Burke; the Under Secretary of Homeland Defense, Juliette Kayyem; the Deputy Under Secretary of Public Safety, Patrick Connelly; State Senator Michael Knapik; the Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Joseph Carter; and the Air

Commander, Maj. Gen.
Michael Akey, attended
the simulator demonstration
to learn why this aircraft has
such an important role in homeland defense.

These key members of the Massachusetts government and more then 40 local contractors learned about the characteristics that make the F-22 a fifth generation fighter. They saw firsthand through the simulator the versatility of this fighter as it employs super-cruise, stealth, maneuverability, integrated situational awareness and versatile weapons loads.

The visit does not signify that Gen. Moseley's vision will come to fruition; rather, it signifies that we are being a proactive unit that understands the value of educating our public on why this vision would benefit Massachusetts and the nation. \star

"My intent is that this is the beginning of a long and prosperous relationship between the 181st and the 126th Aviation. The Infantry love to fly," said Harrington.

The scenario set up by the operations (S-3) section forced the Soldiers to think, adapting their tactics to suit the situation.

"Myself, Capt. Sawyer and Sgt. 1st Class Hall make up the Battalion Operations section. Our job is to put together the best, most realistic and beneficial training imaginable because that's what our troops deserve. This was the end result of that," said Sgt. Major Mark Foster, battalion operations sergeant major.

The mission was based on lessons learned from the Global War on Terrorism, but this type of training prepares Soldiers for other missions as well.

"The varying rules of engagement incorporate domestic missions as well as contingency operations," said Harrington, "We had training for individual Soldiers all the way up to the battalion tactical operations center. The end result is our Soldiers did a tremendous job in a difficult environment. We will use this as a building block for deployment – whether that deployment is for the Boston Marathon or OIF or a Combat Training Center rotation. This training is invaluable."



"Wounded" Soldiers are helped to a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter for medical evacuation.

Soldier and NCO of the Year



Spc. Jeremy S. Leston, Company D, 1st Battalion, 181st Infantry Regiment.

By Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

MILFORD, Mass. – Command Sgt. Maj. David Costa, the Massachusetts National Guard's command sergeant major, recently announced the Soldier and NCO of the year for the Massachusetts National Guard.

Spc. Jeremy S. Leston, Company D, 1st Battalion, 181st Infantry Regiment, and Staff Sgt. Mikaela A. Fahey, Company D, 3rd Battalion, 126th Aviation Regiment, were selected by a board of command sergeants major.

These Soldiers were chosen through a comprehensive selection process conducted at Joint Force Headquarters. They demonstrated the desire, ability and personal traits that are the cornerstone of the American Soldier, said Costa. ★



Staff Sgt. Mikaela A. Fahey, Company D, 3rd Battalion, 126th Aviation Regiment.

National Guard Special Forces Soldiers Leave Afghanistan a Better Place

Courtesy of CJTF-101 Public Affairs

KANDAHAR AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – More than 80 Soldiers from Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group, were honored for their accomplishments during their six-month deployment to southern Afghanistan by the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan Commander Col. Christopher K. Haas during a ceremony at Kandahar Air Field, April 23.

Charlie Co. is made up of National Guardsmen, most from New England, but they were supplemented by Guardsmen from Alabama, North Carolina, New Mexico, Kentucky, Florida, Maryland and many other states. Gathering after redeployment is nearly impossible; this ceremony is an excellent opportunity to honor these individuals for their valuable contributions in the Global War on Terror.



Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan Commander Col. Christopher K. Haas addresses Soldiers from Charlie Co., 1st Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group, during their end-of-tour award ceremony at Kandahar Airfield, April 23. Charlie Co. was deployed to southern Afghanistan supporting Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan since November, conducting combat reconnaissance patrols, humanitarian and medical aid missions as well as clearing Taliban safe havens in Delaram, Gulistan, Ghoziney and several other villages. (Photo: Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan photo by Staff Sgt. Marie Schult)

"The importance of today was that it's the last time, in country, that we will all be together," said Philip H. Macchi. Charlie Co. commander, a lawver from Massachusetts. "In doing what we did today, the guys who fought together and served overseas together were able to see each other and get recognized together. We also had Col. Haas there, the man we fought under, presenting the awards. which would not have been a possibility at all, at home."

Members of Charlie Co. were very active in establishing and maintaining security in Southern Afghanistan. According to their citations they conducted more than 150 combined and joint combat operations, resulting in the deaths of more than 350 insurgents. Macchi said the company participated in more than 200 combat reconnaissance patrols, 60 medical-civil affairs projects (MEDCAPS) and were involved in more than 50 fire fights.

"In all of these events the guys performed very well," said Macchi. "I think the results were felt throughout the battlefield."

For the team at Firebase Ripley, their most memorable accomplishment was the opening of a main supply route that was blocked by the Taliban, according to the Special Forces team leader there. His team, along with the Afghan national security forces, established and maintained checkpoints along the route, breaking the Taliban's hold on it. This enabled the locals to resume trade and commerce in the region, he said.

"In Herat, they conducted at least 15 MEDCAPS, which were directly responsible for the ceasing of rocket attacks on Herat airfield," said Macchi. "Out at Camp Victory they set the conditions for the Cutu Bridge project over the Helmand River."

The area around the Cutu Bridge was very violent, but the Charlie Co. teams there were able to secure the area for construction crews to come in and begin construction on the bridge.

The Farah team secured their area by driving the insurgents out of Gulistan. They also built rapport with the people in the district by successfully maintaining the firebase clinic, which treated more than 500 Afghans a week, said Macchi.

"This deployment was everything I thought it could be and more," said the team leader from Ripley. "Given the area we were in, we really had an opportunity to do everything we were trained to do."

The team leader and his men are from Alabama and were augmented to Charlie Co. for this deployment.

"We could not have functioned as a unit without them," said Macchi. Who said he feels his team made a valuable impact on the lives of the Afghans they touched during this deployment. *



Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan Commander Col. Christopher K. Haas awards Charlie Co., 1st Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group Commander, Maj. Philip H. Macchi, the Bronze Star for his service over the last six months in Afghanistan, during a ceremony on Kandahar Airfield, April 23. Charlie Co. was deployed to southern Afghanistan, supporting Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan since November, conducting combat reconnaissance patrols, humanitarian and medical aid missions as well as clearing Taliban safe havens in Delaram, Gulistan, Ghoziney and several other villages. (Photo: Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan photo by Staff Sgt. Marie Schult)

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Short Takes

OTIS ABROAD

A report from "The Gateway to Iraq" at Baghdad International Airport

By Technical Sgt. Aaron Smith, 447th Air Expeditionary Group

BAGHDAD, Iraq — When people think of Baghdad, most think of a sweltering hot and dry climate. Members of the 102nd Medical Group, Logistics Readiness Squadron and Civil Engineering Squadron experienced something different. On their first weekend in Iraq, and for the first time in at least 40 years, it snowed in Baghdad. Since that day, Otis members have been dealing with new situations and challenges.

Members from these units have joined others from Guard and active duty bases to form the 447th Air Expeditionary Group, stationed at Camp Sather in Iraq. The group's mission is to support U.S. and Coalition Forces through air-lifting supplies, materials and forces. The base is adjacent to Baghdad International Airport.

During the course of their deployment, each section has been instrumental in maintaining the base. The civil engineering squadron completed a variety of projects from setting up concrete barriers for increased security, to ensuring that vital HVAC equipment was working properly despite the harsh environment. CE fire protection



Back row, from left: Senior Airman George Bertocchi, Senior Airman Corey Wright, Master Sgt. Doug Campbell, Senior Master Sgt. Joe Nadeau, Staff Sgt. Christopher Girard, Capt. Christian Leighton, Capt. Shane Kinsey. Front row, from left: Staff Sgt. Curtis Fahey, Master Sgt. Monica Parks, Staff Sgt. Eric Smith, Technical Sgt. Paul Jacques. (Photo by U.S. Air Force)

specialists trained more than 100 local Iraqi firefighters. They also responded to a structural fire at an Iraqi Special Forces firing range where their actions saved the \$6 million facility. Technical Sgt. Gary Gray, from the 102nd Logistics Readiness Squadron, received a command excellence coin for his actions in retrieving a vehicle that three Soldiers had previously lost their lives in. The medical group personnel have treated an average of 20

emergency room patients a day, and about 10 to 20 regular patients while still training for worst case situations.

While the departure of the F-15 and the large quantity of people attending technical school have left Otis a quiet base, members of the 102nd are still involved in the fight against terrorism, and remain an active part of the Guard's mission. ★



Above: A car built by the National Guard Bureau was featured at the Massachusetts Army National Guard Recruiting Command's booth during the "Hot Import Nights" event at the Bayside Expo Center in Boston, Mass., April 26. (Photos: Sgt. James Lally)

Right: Patrons of the "Hot Import Nights" event check out the National Guard's car. The attendees could have their pictures taken with the car and retrieve them at the National Guard's Web site: 800goguard.com.

2008 Federal Women's Program Awards

By Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

MILFORD, Mass. – The Federal Women's Program Awards Ceremony was held April 9, 2008, at Joint Force Headquarters in Milford and was highlighted by a keynote speech made by Massachusetts' Undersecretary for Homeland Security, Juliette Kayyem.

Every year, the Federal Women's Program recognizes women and mentors who have distinguished themselves by significant contributions to their service. The awards are open to all military and civilian members of the

Massachusetts National Guard who have made significant contributions to the Guard.

This year's awardees are Master Sgt. Linda Perry, Army National Guard Woman of the Year 2008; Master Sgt. Lorrie Moran, Air National Guard Woman of the Year 2008; Ms. Geraldine Kingkade, National Guard Civilian Woman of the Year 2008; and Col. Charles Maguire, National Guard Mentor of the Year 2008.

Inspiring the Force

By Sgt. James Lally, Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs



MILFORD, Mass. – A former member of the U.S. Army's elite parachute team, the Golden Knights, addressed Soldiers from the Massachusetts Army National Guard Recruiting Command April 16 at the Sheraton Milford Hotel here.

Retired Army Sgt. 1st Class Dana Bowman, an internationally known motivational speaker, was invited to share his inspirational story with the recruiting team.

Even though the team rates third

in the nation, they are always looking for ways to do better.

Lt. Col. Charles G. Cody, commander of the state's Recruiting and Retention Command, said he first met Bowman at a conference where Bowman was speaking. "I knew he would be perfect for the force," said Cody. "Bowman is a credible non-commissioned officer who has overcome adversity."

Bowman gained worldwide attention Feb. 6, 1994, when he and his teammate, Sgt. Jose Aguillon, collided in mid-air during the team's annual training. Aguillon died instantly. Bowman's legs were severed from his body, one above the knee and one below the knee.

These days, when he isn't jumping out of airplanes or piloting a helicopter, Bowman travels the nation sharing his experience with others.

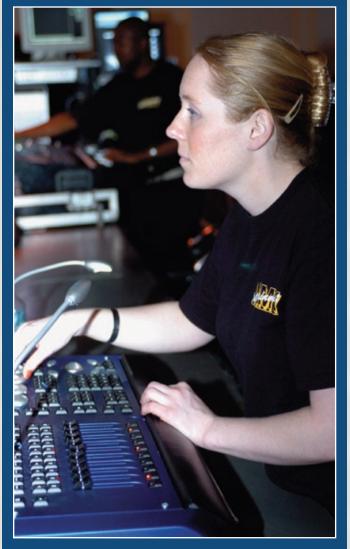
"I like giving people hope and boosting their morale," said Bowman. He tailors his message to meet the needs of varied audiences; however, motivating some groups can be harder than others.

"There is an aura military members have that others don't have," said Bowman. "It makes trying to motivate them a tough nut to crack. Although, when you break through the ice and read the crowd you can speak to them sincerely."

More information about Bowman is available on his Web site: www.danabowman.com/danabowman.htm

(Information from Dana Bowman's biography and Web site were used in this story.)

U.S. Army Soldier Show



Sgt. Stacey Chapman of the Massachusetts National Guard performed in the 2007 U.S. Army Soldier Show and returned this year as an audio and lighting technician

Short Takes

Fielding the Joint Incident Communications Capability System

Story and photos by 2nd Lt. Peter Kurek, Company C, 26th Brigade Special Troops Battalion

HUDSON, Mass. – Company C, 26th Brigade Special Troops Battalion of the Massachusetts Army National Guard recently fielded the new Joint Incident Site Communications Capability system. The members of C Company trained for a week on the new system, which is vital to the Massachusetts National Guard's response during an emergency.

The JISCC system allows military and civilian personnel to communicate in an emergency situation by channeling radio traffic across different radio



Spc. Reardon, left, instructs Staff Sgt. Gately, center, and Spc. Margworth on the ACU1000, which allows different radio systems operating on different frequencies to communicate.



Sgt. Winslow, left, and Spc. Margworth set up satellite communications.

systems used by civilian emergency personnel such as police and fire. Radios operating on different frequencies can be interlinked allowing these agencies to communicate as necessary at the incident site. The JISCC system also provides computer network access and telephone and video teleconferencing capabilities for emergency response coordinators onsite through a satellite uplink.

Capt. George Marshall, commander of Charlie Company, stated that his primary goal is to train all personnel on the system regardless of military occupational specialty, enabling the company to provide a better response and support during an actual incident.

The State Tuition and Fee Waiver Program

By Maj. Edward Hack, Education Services Officer, Joint Force Headquarters

MILFORD, Mass. – The state tuition and fee waiver program, in place since Veterans Day 2005, is actually a reimbursement; the various state colleges, universities and community colleges now reimburse 100 percent of the cost of tuition and fees. Typically, fees are three times the amount of the tuition, thus making this an outstanding financial package for Soldiers and Airmen of the Massachusetts National Guard.

This program is available to Soldiers and Airmen in good standing with the Massachusetts National Guard. You do not need to be a combat veteran, you do not need to reside in the state of Massachusetts, you only need to be a member in good standing with the Massachusetts National Guard. In good standing simply means that you faithfully and diligently attend all scheduled drills and annual training. Both active Guard and Reserve (AGR) members and dual-status technicians are eligible, as are traditional Soldiers and Airmen. There are no extra obligations incurred by participation in this program; therefore commissioned officers and warrant officers do not have to extend and Soldiers and Airmen may use the program up to the month prior to the end of their tour of service.

The program allows each Soldier and Airman to use 130 credit hours at any of the 28 Massachusetts state universities, colleges and community colleges. It can be used in the traditional day/semester method. It can also be used for night classes and online courses.

To apply for the Massachusetts State Tuition and Fee Waiver simply contact the education office, located at the Joint Force Headquarters, Milford, by calling (508) 233-6752 or 6753. Plan to request this at least one month prior to course start date. The education office has been working to inform state schools of these new rules, but if a Soldier or Airman encounters resistance at a school, simply contact the education office at (508) 233-6753 and let us be your advocate.

As with all educational issues, direct coordination between Soldiers and Airmen and this office is highly encouraged – chain of command procedures are not necessary when in pursuit of your civilian educational goals!

104th Civil Engineer Squadron's New Look

By Staff Sgt. James McMullin, 104th Civil Engineer Squadron

BARNES AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, CHICOPEE, Mass. – After having a presence on the base for nearly 60 years, the craftsmen section of the 104th Civil Engineer Squadron was deactivated here in a ceremony on March 1 at 1:30 p.m.

The drawdown of forces is a result of military downsizing brought about by the Air Force Reduction in Force initiative and is not associated with the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission's mandated change in the 104th Fighter Wing mission. The craftsmen made up the largest group of the civil engineer squadron, comprising the carpenters, plumbers, fuel technicians, heavy equipment operators, electricians, engineering, HVAC technicians, civil engineer management and power plant operations.

With this change, the squadron is comprised of the fire department and emergency management sections, an explosive ordnance disposal unit (EOD) and an S-team, which serves as a command, control and quality assurance element. The result of this reorganization is that Civil

Engineering will be shifted from a construction and base operations function to a highly specialized emergency services provider.

There will be nearly 40 displaced personnel as a result of the redesignation. The 40 members will need to cross-train, find positions in other squadrons on base or at other units within the state and region, or retire. The group, commonly referred to as the "Prime BEEF Team," was comprised of 55 members from the craftsman section. Some members of Prime BEEF have been absorbed into the new mission or have left Barnes at their re-enlistment date as a result of the news.

Prime BEEF had remained one of the most actively deploying units on the base, most recently they deployed to San Diego, Calif., last March. The team deployed for 30 days in support of Operation Jumpstart, which is a U.S. Border Patrol project to help control immigration along the U.S.-Mexican border. Other highlights include large and small scale deployments in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom from 2003-2007.

Ready for Patrol



From left, Spc. Diogenes Luna, Spc. Thiago Miranda and Spc. Frederick Maguire, members of 1st Platoon, 182nd Engineer Company, are ready for a patrol in Iraq. (Photo: Courtesy of the 182nd Engineer Company)

Sgt. Brian Gallagher's Commitment to the Cause

By Spc. Charles Espie, 65th Public Affairs Operations Center

BAGHDAD, Iraq – With the military needs of the nation increased for the Global War on Terror, it is common to meet National Guard Soldiers who have deployed once or even twice to the Middle East in support of combat operations. Not so common are the five deployments Sgt. Brain F. Gallagher has served on.

Gallagher, a machinist, is currently deployed with D Company, 1st Battalion, 181st Infantry Regiment, 26th (Yankee) Infantry Brigade Combat Team in Baghdad's International Zone supporting personnel security detail missions.

A 23-year veteran with the Massachusetts Army National Guard, Gallagher first deployed to Kuwait during Operation Desert Storm.

"I went with the old 181st Engineer Battalion," he said. "We stayed in Kuwait during that deployment, but it was cool that I cruised back to the U.S. on a Navy ship with the equipment."

In the following years, Gallagher, a Brockton native, worked as a civilian machinist and served as a drilling member of the Guard until he volunteered to deploy in 2004 with the 102nd Field Artillery for a security mission in Diyala Province.





Sgt. Brian F. Gallagher, Massachusetts Army National Guard, in Iraq. (Photo: Courtesy of the 65th Public Affairs Operations Center)

"It was tough living up there. We didn't have the facilities we have now," he said.

When it came time for the 102nd Field Artillery to be replaced in Diyala, the 49th Military Police Brigade, California National Guard, needed additional members for their mission.

"I found out some guys I knew from years in the Guard were going to deploy with the 49th, so I decided to stay on with them," he said. "I was kind of used to being here, and the money wasn't bad, so why not."

Gallagher returned to Massachusetts after redeploying with the 49th, where he stayed for only a month.

"The funny thing about the Guard is that it is addicting in a way, you become good friends with people and look forward to drill every month to swap stories," he said. "You become closer friends on deployments in my experience, and when a few of my buddies were going to deploy with the 101st (Field Artillery), I just had to volunteer to go again. I guess you can say deployments are addictive as well."

Another reason Gallagher chose to deploy so many times is that he believes in the Iraqi cause.

"I really want to see the country and people succeed, and I have seen so many positive changes in my time here," he said. "I see them (Iraqi Security Force) out patrolling and providing security, when I first got here they were just getting set up."

As Gallagher began his fourth deployment with 101st Field Artillery supporting PSD missions in

Baghdad's International Zone, he noticed the difference in living accommodations, "We had TVs, running water, phones and the Internet," he said. "The most important thing was that it made communication back home much easier."

With four deployments in Operation Iraqi Freedom, Gallagher, a father of two teenaged sons, knows the experience of missing family.

"It was tough that I missed one son's graduation, so I made sure that I took leave to watch the other one graduate."

Even though it was tough, Gallagher said that these deployments have allowed him to provide for his sons in a way that he could not have back home.

While Gallagher's story of five deployments is impressive, he uses his experience to help other Soldiers avoid some of the bumps in the road that come with deployments.

"Deployment paperwork and travel arrangements are easily forgotten once you get to country and start performing the mission, but I try to help these guys get it straightened out so it doesn't become a problem when they go back home," said Gallagher.

As part of the troop surge in 2007, Gallagher extended to stay with D Company.

"I guess I am just used to being here, and I think of it as positively as I can," he said.

Gallagher must be used to it, because after D Company leaves he is looking to extend with the next unit for his sixth deployment. \star

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